

NSC BRIEFING

3 January 1958

EAST GERMAN VISA AUTHORITY OVER ALLIED DIPLOMATIC TRAVELERS

1. In a further effort to enhance the authority and prestige of the East German regime, the USSR has given East Germany authority to issue visas to Allied diplomatic and service passport holders who travel within and through East Germany.
 - A. Mainly affected are diplomats and personnel going to Warsaw and Moscow, and those travelling within East Germany (to the Leipzig Fair for instance) who will now need East German visas. Until now the Soviets had issued visas to such personnel though there was no formal agreement on this.
 1. Rather than submit to East German visa controls, the Allies can reroute travel to Warsaw and Moscow through Scandinavia.
 2. However, official travel within East Germany, other than by military missions in Potsdam, is now thing of past.
 - B. East German regulations state exceptions are "troop personnel" of West Berlin garrisons. Soviet press attaché in Berlin and deputy East German foreign minister say these exceptions include diplomatic personnel attached to the garrisons.
 1. Access travel to Berlin was formally agreed to by Soviets and Allies in 1944.

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2. Probably all persons who heretofore customarily traveled to and from Berlin on basis of Allied travel orders rather than Soviet visas are exempt from regulations.

II. Nevertheless, by asserting its control over travel of Allied diplomats, East Germany is establishing precedent which could someday provide basis for extending controls to official travellers of three powers between West Germany and Berlin.

A. Allied acceptance of East German control over Berlin access would by implication recognize East Germany, and the legal basis for the Allied position in Berlin would be seriously weakened.

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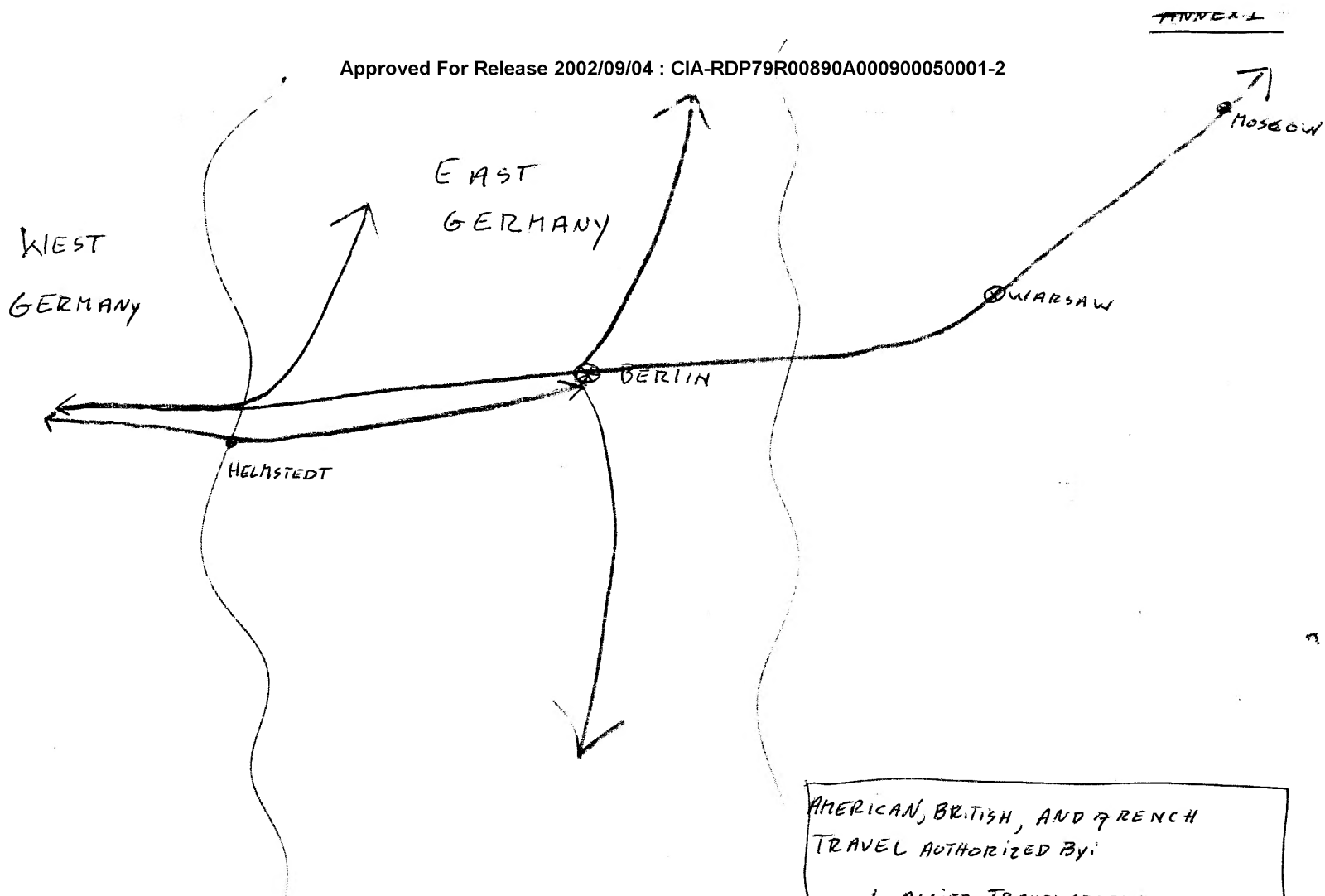
5 January 1958

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SOVIET DEFECTORS IN BERLIN

(SUPPLEMENT TO EAST GERMAN VISA QUESTION)

- I. Soviet troops were observed between 30 December and 3 January supervising East German Police at most crossing points between East and West Berlin, and mobile Soviet reserve forces were reported elsewhere in East Berlin.
 - A. There is no indication that these precautions were related to the border control or Berlin access problem.
 - B. On 1 January 1958 the Deputy Soviet Commandant in Berlin contacted the Western Powers to request the return of a Senior Sergeant Ponomarenko who had committed a "criminal act."
 1. Late on 2 January the British acknowledged that the Sergeant had defected on 30 December and had been granted asylum.
- II. Reports by the Berlin press that additional men defected with Ponomarenko and rumors that the unusual border security was designed to prevent the defection of a "ranking Soviet officer" are unconfirmed.
 - A. Five previous defections in the past 18 months have not occasioned such an all-out Soviet effort to apprehend the defector.
- III. There is no evidence that this defection is connected with unconfirmed press reports alleging anti-communist rioting in the Soviet garrison at Falkenberg or that general political disaffection exists among Soviet troops in East Germany.



AMERICAN, BRITISH, AND FRENCH
TRAVEL AUTHORIZED BY:

1. ALLIED TRAVEL ORDERS _____
2. EAST GERMAN VISAS _____